1:Campbell E-5 (1954-1955)1964
EH14 Sarakatsani EH14
Zagori
Greece. EH1

S G 133

precipices and tend to 'lean over' towards the west. Thus, in general, the western slopes of the Pindus, as in parts of Zagori, present an extremely difficult terrain over which movement is not easy. Many of the valleys are narrow and steep-sided and the two principal rivers Aóös and Vikos lie in deep and formidable ravines. The canyon of Vikos is a remarkable natural feature 4,000 ft. in depth.

S G 133 233 31 [361]

The most important sheep grazing area of the Zagori is the Gamila feature whose highest peak is 8,140 ft. above sea level. On the higher slopes of this mountain the important sheep villages of Papingo, Tsepelevo, Kapesovo, Vradeto, and Skamneli, to mention only the villages on its western flank, graze 33,000 sheep and goats. The rocks of this mountain, as of the other high peaks in Zagori, are of limestone formation; but the smaller features and the valleys are mostly rocks of sandstone.

S G [132]

At the contact lines between the permeable limestone and the sandstone there are often springs and streams fed by the melting snows and the abundant rain, for this is the wettest area of

S G [824]

Greece with, in places, an annual rainfall of 50 inches. The limestone slopes produce a sparse but fine grass which the shepherds claim is the best grazing for the milking or pregnant

S G [137]

ewe. On some of the lower slopes in the eastern Zagori, especially those which face eastwards, there are considerable forests of silver fir and Corsican pine and a grass which is more luxuriant. The shepherds, however, prefer the thin grasses of the open limestone slopes, and comparative figures of milk yields appear to support this preference.

S G 361 311

The more important grazing villages of the Zagori are situated 3,000–4,000 ft. above sea level and the pastures are generally found above the village to an altitude sometimes as high as 6,000 ft. Snow falls on the higher pastures as early as the first

S G 132

days in November and the villages themselves are often deep in snow from Christmas until the middle of March. These are the physical and climatic conditions which lead to the transhu-

S G 132 133 221 233

mant economy—abundant and, generally, well watered summer grasslands with maximum day temperatures which seldom exceed 80°F. in the village, or 70°F. on the higher pastures, but snow and bitter cold which force the shepherds to take their animals to the plains in winter. In the higher villages of Zagori a few sheep and goats are kept under cover during the

/19 cont./

361 221 Sarakatsani depart for the mountains. And in the fall, around the 26 October, the festical of Saint Demetrius, they leave the mountains and come down to the plains.

[233] These movements are ascribable to the very method of herding (5)

[113] 5. See M. Sorre: Les fondements de la géographie humaine, vol. II, part 2, p. 646-647.

that the Saracatsan carry on and to the needs of their flocks, on which they are absolutely dependent.

233 [133] In fact, once transplanted to the Greek mountains which are formed of fissured limestone, the Sarakatsani were able to carry on but a single economic activity: the herding of sheep and goats. These two species are the only ones that could derive benefit from [137] the meager natural pastures which are found on these steep slopes with their scrub vegetation. (6)

[113] 6. See P. Veyret: Géographie de l'élevage, p. 22 and 26.

132 The surface of the land alone presents numerous inconveniences. It is known that temperature drops with altitude. A rise of 200 meters is the equivalent of a distance of 300 kilometers in the direction of a more northerly latitude. (7)

7. See P. Veyret: Ibid., p. 41.

132 233 22 36 Winter thus comes rapidly in the mountains of the Mediterranean zone, and it is particularly severe there, despite the generally temperate climate prevailing in the Hellenic Peninsula. Vegetation can no longer thrive, humidity reaches a degree harmful to the health of the sheep, the snow endangers their lives. A change of habitat thus becomes necessary. The Sarakatsani then come down into the valleys in search of more verdant and climatically milder regions.

When spring arrives, a spring which in Greece actually lasts only a few days, the valleys and grasslands dry up rapidly, the days are too warm for the livestock to endure the temperature, (8)

[191] 8. It is very characteristic to note that the sedentary stock-raisers of Greece, the "Karagounides"